

Geoffrey Hinchliffe's *Liberty and Education. A Civic Republican Approach*.

Liberty and Education: A Civic Republican Approach by Geoffrey Hinchliffe. Abingdon: Routledge, 2015. 173pp., £90.00 (h/b), ISBN 9780415737913

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For the last two millennia, the concept of Liberty has been subjected to many transformations in its meaning and connotations. In this book, Geoffrey Hinchliffe embarks on a philosophical and historical study of the concept of Liberty with two objectives in mind: first, to revisit the idea of republican liberty that flourished in the Renaissance, and that found a revival in the contemporary philosophical works of Quentin Skinner and Philip Pettit; and, second, to explore the underlying relation between the demands of reason and the demands of republican liberty, aiming to find the requirements of liberty as non-domination on the practice and provision of education. Republican liberty stands on the idea that a liberty-bearing individual can only be so if she is guided by her own will; free from domination or dependence. For this to be so, individuals must be capable of developing the human powers that allow them to be liberty-bearing. According to Hinchliffe, these human powers transcend nature's requirements; individuals should be capable to dwell and interact in the 'space of reasons', relating to others as free political beings. The author argues that education has the role of allowing these capabilities to develop, hence, the curriculum, and the authorities that control the educational system must be structured upon an environment of non-domination so that individual liberty may flourish.

Hinchliffe applied the normative structures of republican theory into the field of education by linking the political theory of republicanism with the epistemological and pedagogical literature on reason and the acquisition of knowledge. Despite that it seems to be an overwhelming task, the book manages to present an innovative proposal, capable of showing the underlying links between these varied (and sometimes unrelated) subjects, and supporting his thesis with precision and clarity. However, due to the intrinsic complexity of each of the subjects he tackles in such a short text, some of the details specific to each of the subjects are difficult to grasp. This, in turn, makes the non-expert's transition between each of the four parts of the book complicated, due to the fact that it demands a previous understanding on all republican theory, epistemology and pedagogy. This book may be of relevance to educational theorists interested in the political underlying structure of a republican educational system, and to students of republicanism who are interested in the implications of this political system on educational policy and practice.